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La Présidence des Assemblées Politiques. Par HENRY RIPERT, Auditeur au Conseil d'État. Préface de Paul Deschanel. (Paris: Arthur Rousseau. 1908. Pp. xxiii, 511.

M. Ripert has succeeded in producing an exceedingly clear and interesting and, we believe, an accurate sketch of the presiding officers of various national legislative assemblies. The work was awarded the Prix Rossi in the year 1907, by the Faculté de Droit de Paris.

In Book I the author considers from both the historical and theoretical standpoints the non-elective presiding officers of "lower" houses of parliament (the French "corps législatif" under the First and Second Empires and the chamber of deputies under the Restoration, and the popular assemblies of Sweden, Holland and Portugal), those of "upper" chambers (the French senate, the English house of lords, the American senate and the German bundesrath) and in Book II he treats in the same manner of presiding officers who are elected. This latter part is far more important as a matter of course, and the treatment is much more complete and extended, centering around the speaker of the English house of commons, the speaker of the American house of representatives and the presidents of the French senate and chamber of deputies. A few supplementary pages describe the kindred officials in Belgium, Italy, Austria-Hungary and the German Reichstag.

Of particular interest is his sketch of the history of the growing power and influence of the speaker of the house of representatives, from its beginning in 1789 to its culmination in the persons of Thomas B. Reed and Joseph G. Cannon. The author interprets this rightly as the natural attempt of the people to provide a principle of unity in a government "based entirely . . . upon the principle of the absolute separation of the executive and legislative powers" (p. 248), that is to say, it is in reality "a reaction against the dispersion of power and weakening of authority intended and magnified by the constitution A chief was needed and the speaker alone, by his prerogatives, has been able to become that chief" (p. 251). M. Ripert modifies this statement by noting the recent growth of the concurrent and competing power of the executive, as instanced by Cleveland, McKinley and Roosevelt who "raised their office by their personal qualities, and gave to it a reputation (un éclat) superior to that of the speaker." Furthermore, it is necessary "to take account of the tendency which seems to impel the United States toward an active foreign policy, in which the executive power will always hold the first place. But the office of speaker has

within it a peculiar power which assures to it the duration of its influence If the president governs through his ministers, the speaker directs or at least controls through his committees, and in a conflict between the two, the last word will belong probably to the one who has control" (p. 251). Dr. Woodrow Wilson stated in his *Congressional Government* some years ago that the government of the United States is in reality a government by the committees of congress, a congressional government of which the speaker is chief. M. Ripert denies this, saying—"This is no longer true today since the presidents of the republic have rediscovered the secret of themselves guiding [the affairs] of the country" (p. 270).

Henry Clay was the first to grasp the idea of the possible influence of the office of speaker and the power to which it might attain. Says M. Ripert: "For the Americans, the best speakers are those who approach most closely the ideal type of the office which—with his activity, his energy, and also his arbitrariness—Henry Clay set forth with complete success at the beginning of the nineteenth century. It is according to his type that the most celebrated speakers have sought to model their administrations and, since the civil war, several of them have closely approached it." Colfax, Blaine, Carlisle and Reed are of this number (p. 297).

Lack of space forbids further quotation, but it should be mentioned that the author considers the speaker of the English house of commons as the ideal of a non-partisan presiding officer, partaking more of the character of a magistrate or judge than of a political leader (pp. 10, 223 234), and states that the president of the French chamber of deputies occupies a position midway between those of the American and English type, i. e., he is a party man, dependent upon party success (p. 444), but temporarily invested with the office and duties of a magistrate (p. 421).

One can merely note the keen and effective characterization or estimate of such men of historic importance as Dupin, Morny, Gambetta, Floquet (who is, says the author, the ideal type of a contemporary French presiding officer, p. 433), Deschanel, etc. The summary of political conditions in European parliaments at various periods of the nineteenth century is clear and telling.

It has been said in a tone of semi-humorous deprecation that few Frenchmen, whatever may be the extent of their learning, are able to quote English correctly. M. Ripert is no exception to the rule. Not only does he speak of the "internal tax on tobacco" (p. 308) and rules "fremed" by the speaker (p. 191 note), but when describing on

page 238 the method of "putting the questions" and counting the votes used by the speaker of the house of commons, he says: "le speaker les compte et déclare 'Je pense que les oui l'emportent (the ayes *ave et*) ou que les non l'emportent' (the noes *ave et*)," thus with charming naïveté attributing to that august personage the use of a hybrid Cockney dialect! The author also shows signs of provincial prejudice by quoting with seeming approval the remark of another French writer, M. de Franqueville, who says that at times the English house of commons is so careless of good order that "l'illustre enciente présente souvent l'aspect d'une assemblée de *yankees* beaucoup plus que celui d'une réunion de gentlemen!" (p. 199).

In conclusion it should be said that the work fills a long felt want by furnishing in a clear and scholarly form a comprehensive survey of a class of officials of vital importance in the political world, whose growing influence is more and more worthy of serious attention.

WILLIAM STARR MYERS.

Railroad Promotion and Capitalization. BY F. A. CLEVELAND and F. W. POWELL (New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1909. Pp. xiv, 368.)

The reader who by the title of this book may be led to expect a dissertation on present day "high finance" will not find his expectation realized, for only in the final chapter of fifteen pages is reference to the methods of the underwriting syndicates that were first employed in this country in 1871 and in England at about the same time. What the reader will find is a setting forth of the physical, political and commercial conditions that caused increase in the means of transportation to be the most pressing need of the newly founded United States. He will find an outline of the manner in which river traffic was developed, wagon routes extended into the interior, and energy turned to the construction of canals. Then the beginnings of the railroads are traced, the popular acceptance slow at first, but that as the possibilities of transportation by rail received demonstration spread with a feverish onrush involving states, counties, and municipalities in the speculative mania that culminated in the panic of 1837, leaving states financially stranded, banks suspended, business prostrate and property depreciated.